REMARKS

The Examiner's action dated October 21, 2003, has been received, and its contents carefully noted. In addition, note is taken of a personal interview held with Examiners Nordmeyer and Pyon on March 25, 2004.

Substance of the Interview:

During the interview, undersigned counsel pointed out the essential differences between the present invention and the applied references. In particular, counsel pointed out that the section according to the present invention is provided with a longitudinal succession of mechanically weakened areas, each area being a precursor for a hole having a closed periphery. It was further pointed out that, according to the invention, at least one of the precursors is a blind hole whose bottom is constituted by a continuous web, a through-hole surrounded by a continuous annular web, or a closed contour formed by a succession of blind openings or through openings located along the periphery of the hole. In addition, it was pointed out that, according to preferred embodiments of invention, the

section has a U-shape and is composed of a wall and two flanges each extending transversely to the wall.

The references relied upon to support rejections of the previous claims were the U.S. patents to Thorp and Ogasawara.

It was pointed out that Thorp discloses a cover for a surface mounted alarm unit. This cover is in the form of a box having a base and four walls and the walls are provided with weakened areas defining panels that can be removed to create open slots. These slots are provided to receive conduits and because they are provided in a cover, these slots must be open at the outer edge of the walls in order to fit around conduits that have already been installed in the base of the associated junction box.

It was further pointed out that the U.S. patent to Ogasawara is directed to a specialized mounting structure for an automobile door mirror. This patent discloses openings for receiving fastening screws, which openings are constituted by holes surrounded by circumferentially spaced hook-shaped parts 15 or circumferentially spaced concave parts 10.

Thus, neither of these references discloses hole precursors having any of the forms contemplated by the present invention, as defined above, and it would be contrary to the teachings of Thorp to replace the conduit-receiving slots (e.g. 132) disclosed therein by any of the mounting holes disclosed by Ogasawara.

During the interview, the Examiners further pointed out that sine the present claims are directed to an article, limitations relating to the method of forming the article would be given no weight and suggested that these limitations be deleted.

Finally, the Examiners made a commitment to not make the next action final if a RCE is filed.

Response to Office Action

By the present amendment, previous independent claim 28 has been cancelled and replace by new independent claim 47. As suggested by the Examiners, this claim has been drafted to not include any recitations relating to the method of forming the section.

Claim 47 now specifies that the section has a U-shaped cross section and is provided with a longitudinal succession of precursors for a hole having a closed periphery. Claim 47 further specifies that at least one of these precursors is a blind hole whose bottom is constituted by a continuous web, or a through-hole surrounded by a continuous annular web, or a closed contour formed by a succession of blind openings or through openings located along the periphery of the hole.

It is believed to be readily apparent that neither of the applied references discloses the hole precursor forms defined in claim 47. The slots disclosed by Thorp are not holes having a closed periphery and do not have any of the specific forms defined in claim 47.

Ogasawara does not disclose hole precursors, but rather holes that have been formed into their final state. None of these holes has the specific forms defined in claim 47. Clearly Ogasawara does not disclose a blind hole whose bottom is constituted by a continuous web, or a closed contour formed by a succession of blind openings or through-openings. In addition, the through holes disclosed in this reference are not surrounded by a continuous annular web.

It is therefore submitted that new independent claim 47 clearly distinguishes over each of the applied references and that no combination of the teachings of those references could result in the claimed structure.

Independent claim 28, which has been amended to delete all recitations relating to the method of forming the claimed section, defines mechanically weakened area forming holes or hole precursors, wherein each weakened area is delimited by a contour formed by through-openings and the weakened area has an oblong section. Neither of the applied references discloses a hole or hole precursor delimited by such a contour or having an oblong section.

Equally clearly, neither of the applied references discloses a section having a U-shaped cross section.

Accordingly, it is submitted that each of the independent claims now in the application clearly distinguishes over the applied references. In addition, the dependent claims define additional features not disclosed in those references.

Accordingly, it is requested that the previous rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn, that pending claims

28, 30-45, 47 and 48 be allowed, and that the application be found in allowable condition.

If the above amendment should not now place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call undersigned counsel to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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